

City of Austin's BCCP Activities
Quarter 1 Update: 1 October – 31 December 2020

BCCP Administration	
Infrastructure Projects	Four Infrastructure Habitat Assessment Applications were processed, and Determination Letters were issued from October – December 2020.
Land Acquisition /Management Agreements	Austin Water (AW) BCP is still working toward acquisition of Bright Leaf Preserves, that is expected by April 2021. Staff are also working with representatives of a proposed development at the east end of Milky Way in River Place on a 10-acre donation of creek adjacent to existing Park West Preserve. BCP (AW & Travis County) staff evaluated a Karen Mountain tract along Bull Creek for potential acquisition.
Reports and Events	Staff participated in the Westcave Christmas Bird Count, where the count area overlaps BCP property, Dec. 15.
Dual-managed Properties	A second draft interdepartmental agreement prepared in 2020 by AW BCP for dual management of PARD preserves, as required by the permit, is still being discussed with PARD staff. While the 1996 HCP defined specific preserve areas for bird habitat, karst preserve areas on PARD-managed parks and preserves were never defined, along with clarification of roles for AW BCP in co-managing them. Staff suggested changes to a draft scope of work created by PARD for developing a Climate Vulnerability Analysis and Recommended Strategies plan for Austin Parks and Recreation Natural Areas. Dual managed BCP properties were included in the scope. Some proposed guidance for management goals and strategies in the plan conflict with primary goals of the BCCP and existing provisions of the BCP management plan. When suggestions were not addressed, staff requested that properties dual-managed with PARD be excluded from the scope.
Personnel	Hired William Stout to assist with reforestation efforts as part of an Urban Forest grant.
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) and Black-capped Vireo (BCVI)	Staff compiled data and drafted summary reports for the 2020 field season. Due to changes in field protocols to comply with Covid-19 safety measures, results from the 2020 field season are not expected to be consistent with previous years.
Jollyville Plateau Salamander	BCP continues to conduct aquatic life surveys of springs across the BCP on a periodic basis in hopes of locating new salamander locations and other rare stygobitic life.
Karst invertebrates/ karst work	AW BCP staff are collecting data for preparation of karst completion status analysis and report expected in FY21 with TC BCP.

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	<p>Currently hydrogeological studies are underway in the FM 2222 and RM 620 area in cooperation with TxDOT, for which an annual report was prepared. The study is still restoring filled caves on existing preserves and assessing springs both to enhance the karst preserve habitat but also in preparation of later drip monitoring and dye tracing water source areas. Several recent caves were discovered including Black Cap Cave and Mossy Elm Cave. Archeological artifacts were discovered in the fill excavated from Mossy Elm Cave, apparently recent wash in from surface artifacts. The Texas Historical Commission led an effort with archeologist Ron Ralph to recover artifacts from the excavated fill, a tremendous benefit to the BCP to help understand the history of our preserves.</p> <p>Hydrogeological study of permit caves along Slaughter Lane in Circle C continued with support from Zara Environmental LLC funded mostly by Mobility Corridor Project of COA Public Works. Access to Pipeline Cave on Parkside Village by Whitestone Reit has allowed a study of the permit cave and allowed huge improvement in habitat described in the karst section of the annual report. Joe Diaz, PARD manager for Circle C Metro Park supported access for cave restoration and tracing on parkland. A tracer injection was conducted near Midnight Cave on Nov. 12 2020 to help define its water source area. A report is anticipated in February 2021.</p>
Plant and Animal Control	
Mammals	47 hogs and 21 deer were removed by contractors and City staff this quarter.
Red-imported fire ants and Tawny crazy ants	AW BCP staff created and delivered a training for PARD staff for identifying and reporting Tawny crazy ants.
Invasive Plants	BCP staff are continuing efforts to remove non-native plants on COA BCP tracts.
Land Stewardship	
Habitat Restoration	Due to Covid-19, a limited number of staff and volunteers maintained restoration projects at the Vireo Preserve to promote water retention, slope stabilization, soil restoration, and reforestation on degraded sites to promote future habitat for GCWA and BCVI.
	Using funds from an Urban Forest grant, implemented a 0.5-mile bioswale project on JJ&T, hired William Stout to assist with reforestation efforts, planted over 250 trees and shrubs, and collected, prepped, and seeded over 50,000 native plant seeds across a 50-acre site.
	To assist with reforestation efforts on JJ&T, installed a native plant nursery on JJ&T, complete with a fence to prevent WTD herbivory. This nursery will serve as propagation and staging area for native plants to be used for the bioswale project.
	With the limited volunteer opportunities during Covid-19 stages 4/5, staff hosted a series of reforestation classes to provide continuing education for volunteers and the public, including historical ecology, native plant identification, tree planting, invasive plant identification and removal, hydrological processes and vegetation, soil biology, and incorporating native fungi into restoration.
	Worked with Texas State University student and faculty to collect and plant 480 Texas red oak acorns for a research project on Reicher Ranch. This was a very poor acorn production year for all species of oaks on BCP.

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	Because of poor acorn crop, few shin oak acorns were available for collection, but the few collected were planted in potential Black-capped Vireo habitat in the middle section of the Cortaña tract. A count of seedlings from acorns planted in 2019 revealed a minimum emergence rate of 76%.
Fencing	Fencing installation was initiated on Park West. Future fencing in proposed Bright Leaf Preserve acquisition and Carol Lee was planned.
Roads	Road restoration was completed on Cortana tract.
Oak Wilt	Planned trenches to contain oak wilt infection within Emma Long Park and adjacent to Cortaña tract.
Wildfire Preparedness	Constructed shaded fuel break on the JJ&T boundary with Apache Shores neighborhood.
Law Enforcement	
Trespass and Criminal Mischief	Trespassing picked up during the pandemic. We continue to work on fencing, patrolling and education to avoid preserve damage.
	Continued patrols of Preserve boundaries.
Outreach/Volunteers	
<p><i>See BCP Partners Education Summary October– December 2020.</i></p> <p>Staff have helped create educational webinars for our Wildlands Neighbors Group, BCP Forest Restoration Training, and AFD Wildfire Division. A short educational video on Austin geology is being prepared.</p>	